

Application No. 10/516,387
Paper Dated: November 3, 2009
In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of May 4, 2009
Attorney Docket No. 4623-045790

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of leaching a metal value from a heap of a metal-containing ore, which method includes the step of:

supplying a leach liquor onto a top surface of a section of a heap length and allowing the leach liquor (~~containing containing~~ metal values in solution) solution to drain from a lower part of the section, with the leach liquor being supplied for a relatively short time period of less than 4 hours ~~per in each~~ 24 hour period and at a flow rate that is sufficient so that the downwardly flowing leach liquor saturates the section of the heap while the leach liquor flows through the section of the heap.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 which further includes supplying the leach liquor at a flow rate that establishes and maintains the plug flow of the leach liquor and maintains saturation of the section of the heap while the leach liquor flows through the section of the heap.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 2 which further includes supplying the leach liquor as a downwardly flowing curtain that contacts the top surface of the heap as a line or a narrow band that extends across the top surface and moving the curtain along the length of the section of the heap or the entire length of the heap continuously or in a series of steps.

Claim 4 (Original): The method defined in claim 3 wherein the curtain is continuous across the top surface of the heap.

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Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 further including supplying the leach liquor at a flow rate that is greater than 15 l/hr/m² of the top surface of the section.

Claim 6 (Original): The method defined in claim 5 wherein the flow rate is greater than 20 l hr/m² of the top surface of the section.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 6 wherein the flow rate is greater than 25 l hr/m² of the top surface of the section.

Claims 8-9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 wherein the time period is less than 3 hours per 24 hour period.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 wherein the time period is less than 2 hours per 24 hour period.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 further including supplying the leach liquor via a distributor that can be moved over the surface of the heap.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 further including retaining and minimising run-off of the leach liquor supplied onto the top surface by positioning a barrier on the top surface of the heap.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The method defined in claim 1 further including retaining and minimising run-off of the leach liquor supplied onto the top surface-by

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forming a series of furrows or other suitable troughs for leach liquor, and supplying the leach liquor into the furrows.

Claims 15-20 (Cancelled).

Claim 21 (Currently Amended) A method of leaching a metal value from a heap of a metal-containing ore, which method includes the steps of:

(a) supplying a leach liquor onto a top surface of a section of a length of the heap and allowing the leach liquor (~~containing~~ containing metal values in ~~solution~~) solution to drain from a lower part of the section; with the leach liquor being supplied for a relatively short time period of less than 4 hours ~~per in each 24 hours hour period~~ as a downwardly flowing curtain that contacts the top surface of the heap as a line or a narrow band of less than 1 m wide that extends across the top surface at a flow rate that is sufficient so that the downwardly flowing leach liquor saturates the section of the heap while the leach liquor flows through the section of the heap; and

(b) moving the curtain along the length of the section of the heap or the entire length of the heap continuously or in a series of steps.

Claim 22 (New) A method of leaching a metal value from a heap of a metal-containing ore, which method includes the steps of:

(a) supplying a leach liquor onto a top surface of a first section of a length of the heap and allowing the leach liquor containing metal values in solution to drain from a lower part of the section; with the leach liquor being supplied for a relatively short time period of less than 4 hours in each 24 hour period at a flow rate that is sufficient so that the downwardly flowing leach liquor saturates the section of the heap while the leach liquor flows through the section of the heap; and

(b) after supplying the leach liquor to the first section for the time period, repeating step (a) in a second section of the heap.